Appendix A — Project Design Features

Project design features (PDFs) are included in the proposed action for the purpose of reducing anticipated environmental impacts which might otherwise stem from project implementation. The PDFs noted below would be integral to all activities and action alternatives.

- Where sage-grouse occupy sage-grouse habitat, construction of range improvements, fencing of meadows, and herbicide treatments would occur outside of the brood-rearing season (June-August).
- Fencing in sage-grouse areas would have markers installed to help avoid collisions.
- Tree removal areas implemented during the nesting season for migratory birds would first be surveyed by a qualified biologist to identify active nests and trees that may support cavity nesting birds. When nests or cavities are found, the BLM biologist would determine the appropriate course of action, which could include avoidance, leaving the tree in place, or a timing restriction.
- Old growth trees would be left intact.
- If BLM sensitive plants are discovered during pre-treatment surveys, they would be marked and avoided.
- Soils would be evaluated in treatment areas before implementation to assess operability and if specific treatments are appropriate for the soil.
- Steeper slopes would be avoided or skid trails would be perpendicular to the slope or waterbars would be installed to minimize effects.
- Soil, Water, and Air program Best Management Practices (Appendix B) would be implemented to eliminate or minimize soil erosion and protect water quality. The implementation of treatments would be scheduled during a low-impact period when vehicles and equipment would not cause soil rutting or compaction, surface disturbance would be minimized and mitigated, and sensitive riparian areas, wetlands, and drainages would be avoided to the extent possible.
- In areas where erosion potential is deemed high, downed trees/slash would be left in place.
- Treatment areas would be closed to use by all motorized vehicles including off-highway vehicles where needed to prevent new vehicle routes from becoming established. Signs indicating the road closure and management restrictions would be installed at access points to the treatment areas.
- Existing roads in the treatment areas would generally remain open where they serve a legitimate public purpose. They would be managed to prevent generation of excessive dust and erosion.
- Shredded or cut vegetation would generally be left in place to reduce dust generation, contribute organic matter, obliterate vehicle tracks, stabilize the soil surface, and protect vegetation. Stump height would be less than six inches and slash height would not exceed two feet in depth.
- If invasive species are found in the project area after treatment and seeding, the sites would be identified for treatment in the Field Office Annual Weed Treatment Plan.
- All equipment utilized in the project area would be washed and determined to be free of noxious or invasive species prior to entering the project area.

- Cultural resources evaluated as eligible under the National Register of Historic Places and unevaluated cultural resources identified during implementation of the project would be avoided. As always respect for all cultural resources would be maintained especially in the case of human remains that would be inadvertently discovered in the process of conducting the proposed project.
- Herbicides would be applied as per label instructions.
- All personnel applying herbicides would either be certified by the BLM and/or the State of Nevada, or they would be supervised by a BLM or State of Nevada Certified Applicator.
- Bureau or other personnel applying herbicides would use personnel protective equipment while spraying or handling herbicides.
- Herbicide application operations would be suspended when wind speed exceeds 6 mph or precipitation is imminent.
- Some treatment areas could be signed, if needed, indicating the herbicide used and the date of treatment. Areas which are isolated and/or receive very little use by human beings would not be signed.
- During herbicides treatments, all aspects of the operation would be managed in compliance with all state laws and the chemical label requirements, including as worker and environmental safety precautions for chemical storage, mixing, and loading. The actual application rate would be measured and calibrated as needed to assure that the appropriate amount of chemical is applied per unit area of ground. The BLM would provide a certified Contracting Officers Representative (COR) to oversee the spray operation.
- During herbicide treatments, a pre-application sweep of the area would be completed (ie. looking for nesting birds).
- Herbicide would not be applied during the flowering season when pollinating insects are present (fall for rabbitbrush).
- Herbicide treatments would not occur when livestock are present.
- A "no herbicide treatment" buffer zone of at least 100 feet from drainage bottoms and 300 feet around springs and perennial water sources would be required.
- Limiting in-stream work to the period between July 1 and September 15, when stream flows are at their lowest levels.
- Diverting stream flow around the project area during in-stream work, and minimizing in-stream equipment operation to the greatest extent practicable.
- Firewood or biomass removal areas would be determined by the BLM on a yearly basis based on public demand and project needs. Individuals would be required to obtain a permit or contract from the Carson City District Office, BLM. Areas would be located near existing roads in order to minimize off road travel. No firewood cutting would be allowed in cultural resource areas.
- Piles would be constructed in a manner making them easy to light in the snow resulting in limited scorch and no mortality of the live overstory trees. Piles would be constructed in canopy openings and be approximately 6 feet in diameter and up to 6 feet tall. Small diameter material is to be piled in the center of the pile and large diameter material on the outside. Tepee the large material on the outside of the pile so it falls into the pile as it burns down. Construct piles to minimize air space. After construction work chain saw through pile multiple times to take the air out and restack if necessary.

- Fuel, motor oil, and any other hazardous product would be handled according to the Nevada State Environmental Commission's Handbook of Best Management Practices.
- Work would be conducted during the week, and notice would be given regarding area and timing of treatment in any given year.
- The use of a helicopter, if necessary to meet objectives for wild horse management, would not occur during the six weeks prior and six weeks following the peak foaling period (mid-April to mid-May); March 1 through June 30.
- Holders of land use authorizations in the project area would be notified in writing from the BLM Stillwater Field Office of the Project.

Treatments would be scheduled outside periods of very high to extreme fire danger or by having water available on site during treatment operations.